F&BF Schools Programme

**Controversial Issues INTRODUCTION**

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The Faith & Belief Forum has worked tirelessly for over 20 years to build good relations between people of all faiths and beliefs, and to create a society where difference is celebrated. Founded in 1997 as the Three Faiths Forum, we work directly with people in businesses, schools, universities and in the wider community.

# Schools work

We believe that young people should feel confident communicating and collaborating with anybody, regardless of their faith, belief, culture or background. Questions of belief and personal identity have never been more complex for young people. The ease with which people can connect with one another across the globe, and the massive

cultural diversity found in the UK, means that young people need the skills and confidence to navigate this terrain.

F&BF’s work to date has been working directly with schools; Linking schools, running workshops and CPD training. We are creating a suite of online resources aimed at teachers, to enable us to share our expertise and methodologies with

education professionals in a scalable and sustainable way, that is attractive to overworked teachers and underfunded schools.

Our in-house team of educationalists have written lesson plans for KS3 teachers of RE, PSHE, Humanities and Citizenship, in collaboration with a KS3 specialist RE teacher.

We have three packages covering these subjects:

1. Safe Space
2. Identity
3. Controversial Issues

Each package teaches students invaluable life skills, centered around our methodologies of skills for interfaith; having meaningful encounters and dialogues with others. They are designed to take students on a journey:

1. Setting the space and learning the skills needed to make sure everyone is comfortable to have dialogues
2. Exploring their own and each other’s identities in understanding and celebrating difference
3. Exploring the challenges that all the above bring and their place as active citizens in society

The lesson plans work best, taught in order and each lesson extends the learning of the previous, and each package transitions into the next topic taking on prior learning and extending students’ learning.

# Curriculum links

The resource aims to address specific learning objectives in the RE, PSHE, RSE and Citizenship curriculum. The resources will also map to articles in the UNICEF rights respecting charter

as well as other non-curriculum subjects and issues. We are initially aiming the resources for KS3, as this is a transition point in the system and can serve as an ‘anchor’ in which we can scale up or down to the relevant Key Stage in the future.

The learning objectives have been taken from the following published documents:

* **RE** [**Living Difference II**](https://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/LivingDifferenceIII-March2017.pdf): The agreed syllabus for religious education in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and the London Borough of Camden (where our central office is based).

# [The national curriculum framework for RE (NCFRE)](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/RE_Review_Summary.pdf)

* **Religious Education Council of England and Wales**

# [REsilience: Teaching Controversial Topics](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resilience-teaching-controversial-topics/)

* **PSHE foundation** [**Programme of Study for PSHE Education (Key Stages 1– 5)**](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/programme-study-pshe-education-key-stages-1%25E2%2580%25935). Updated to include the statutory requirements outlined in the new [**RSE curriculum**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/805781/Relationships_Education__Relationships_and_Sex_Education__RSE__and_Health_Education.pdf)

# Citizenship [The national curriculum in England: citizenship programmes of study for Key Stages 3 and 4](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239060/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Citizenship.pdf)

The package also supports learning in these other curricula:

# AQA RE syllabus: GCSE A (8062) [thematic studies](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062/subject-content/component-2-thematic-studies)

* **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development objectives and British Values** [**Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools Departmental advice for maintained schools**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380595/SMSC_Guidance_Maintained_Schools.pdf)

# UNICEF [Rights respecting schools](https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/)

More details as to how the learning objectives maps to each of the above curricula will follow.

**Identity Package**

# 1 Introduction

The Controversial Issues package builds on from both the

Safe Space and the Identity packages. The aim of the package is to explore how your students can engage positively and meaningfully in challenging discussion around controversial issues, and thus relies heavily on the principles and practices

covered in the first package, as well as the values, understanding and ability to reflect gained from the second.

The first two packages are focused on how to engage in basic dialogue with people while navigating difference and exploring one’s own viewpoints and identities with a critical lens; this package goes a step further and aims to prepare your students for issues which are controversial and thus may require more honed skills than the average initial encounter.

We believe it’s crucial for your students to be given a structured space within their learning where they can both explore issues that affect their lives and their communities, as well as practice the behaviours that are most conducive for positive engagement. It is our hope that these lesson plans go some way to supporting the development of your students as young people capable of participating meaningfully in events happening around them – feeling confident enough to do so.

We have highlighted various specific factors which make engagement in discussion around controversial issues challenging, along with the corresponding skills that enable people to overcome those challenges.

These include:

1. Fear of engagement due to being unsure versus self-confidence;
2. Feeling overwhelmed due to multiplicity of sometimes conflicting stances versus critical thinking and reading;
3. Conversations being shut down / difficult to handle

due to strong emotions being evoked, versus emotional literacy and empathy;

1. Coming across fundamental differences which pose as stumbling blocks, versus letting go of the need to ‘win’ or agree and resolving to learn something anyway;
2. People becoming polarised over issues and arguments lacking nuance due to not wanting to lose identity, versus resisting camp mentality and always looking to understand influences, critique own side and keep an open mind about other arguments and the overall complexity of issues.

We believe these skills will prepare students for many aspects of life in which diversity of experience and opinion is a reality to be navigated and celebrated.

The lesson plans explore each of these factor-skill combinations through a particular issue, complete with different perspectives for you to present and students to explore, through selected resources and accompanying worksheets.

We chose these issues based both on consultations with teachers at a variety of schools, as well as the fact that they touch on identity, religion, and other areas of F&BF expertise and follow neatly on from themes explored in the previous two packages.

We don’t see these issues as inherently controversial; rather it’s the climate surrounding them (debate is often toxic, meaningful communication and dialogue is scarce, opinions are divided, etc.) that we encourage you to explore with your students.

We hope that this package goes some way in supporting you as teachers to overcome the challenges that attempting to teach controversial issues can sometimes pose. The lesson plans have been designed in such a way so as to focus on development of a particular skill rather than the

allegedly controversial issue itself, thus not requiring specialist knowledge from the teacher or the responsibility to guide students towards a resolution. Rather, they aim to **support you in facilitating the opening up of conversations, the sharing of views and the modelling of positive dialogue**

– which can then more easily be applied to any issue.

Ahead of each lesson we encourage you to reflect on your own thoughts and relationship to the issue, in order to be able to spot your own unconscious biases. It’s important this is done thoroughly so you can **model engaging with a critical self-awareness**, as it’s of course natural that our take on an issue influences the way we engage.

We encourage you to also think carefully about the specificities of each topic in relation to your class; evaluate how the content may impact particular students in your class, (due to background, culture, beliefs, personal or family involvement), and what protection from victimisation, alienation and bullying they may need.

Other preparation questions include: what conversations do you need to be ready for, what’s the school stance / what might parents’ reactions to these conversations be? Feel free to create basic principles for these sessions, e.g. to ask students to reflect before sharing: Is it helpful, true, kind?

At the beginning of each lesson plan we ask you to set or recap the Safe Space Agreement with your students, and we refer to activities from the previous two packages where possible; we’d encourage you to explicitly draw from them too, depending on what of the others you have covered.

**The nature of controversial issues is that they are experienced and viewed differently across time and space, and are not static**. We understand every local area, school, classroom has a different context and dynamic and that not all groups will be affected by national or global issues in the same way. The issues we have chosen may

be too challenging or delicate for your context, and because of this the activities follow a format so as to welcome being replaced with other issues should this be more appropriate for you. Ultimately **the aim of the package is to explore *how*, and not necessarily *what* to discuss**. The skills, unlike the topics, are timeless and universally important.

We have included a multiplicity of views on each issue and

we encourage you to supplement these with perspectives which are closer to home and represent the communities familiar to your particular students. As with all F&BF’s content, there’s a **focus in this package on individual, lived experience** and

we encourage you to emphasise complexity as a fact throughout.

The accompanying film resource explores different factors that make issues controversial, and the corresponding skills for each of this.

The film follows a main character as she observes challenging discussion or heated debate taking place between two groups of people and struggles to engage for several reasons. It then goes on to explore the skills she develops to overcome these struggles and how she puts them into practice to be able to participate in the discussions around these issues and support an environment more conducive to genuine learning.

The film can serve as an introduction to the package and a stand-alone resource in itself exploring controversial issues; it can also be broken up into relevant scenes to explore one particular challenging factor or remedial skill at a time.

The scenes correspond chronologically to the lesson plans and each plan contains guidance as to the scenes that can be focused on for that skill. The scenes don’t explicitly refer to any particular issue, meaning it can still be used if you decide to swap any issues out for others – the film too supports the focus of this package being on the relevant skills.

# Lesson 1 What makes an issue controversial? (Introduction)

This introductory lesson uses discussion to explore what some of the factors are which make issues controversial. This lesson serves as a launching pad for exploration of the skills that prove useful when faced with some of these characteristics of controversial issues.

Learning Objectives:

* To be able to understand and define what controversial issues are
* To explore different factors that make an issue controversial
* Explore factors that can characterise controversy

The following 2 – 6 lessons each take one of the characterising features of controversial issues explored in the introductory lessons, and through a given topic helps your students to explore and develop the skill required to overcome this barrier to engagement.

These pages show indicative maps of where we think this package fits with the RE, PSHE and Citizenship curricula:

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| Subject **RE** |
| **1** [**Living Difference III**](https://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/LivingDifferenceIII-March2017.pdf)Approach to enquiry five key steps:* **Communicate** and **Apply** to their own and others’ experience
* **Enquire** and **Contextualise** to engage intellectually
* **Evaluate** to discern value for others and themselves
 | **2** [**The national curriculum framework for RE (NCFRE)**](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/RE_Review_Summary.pdf)**KS3*** B2. Observe and interpret a wide range of ways in which commitment and identity are expressed.

They develop insightful analysis and evaluation of controversies about commitment to religions and worldviews, accounting for the impact of diversity within and between communities.* C3. Explore and express insights into significant moral and ethical questions posed by being human in ways that are well-informed and which invite personal response, using reasoning which may draw on a range of examples from real life, fiction or other forms of media.
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| Subject **PSHE** |
| [**PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE education**](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/PSHE%20Association%20Programme%20of%20Study%20for%20PSHE%20Education%20%2528Key%20stages%201%25E2%2580%25935%2529%252C%20Jan%202020_0.pdf)*Updated to include the statutory requirements outlined in the new RSE curriculum* |
| * **CORE THEME 1: HEALTH AND WELLBEING**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Health and Wellbeing**Self-concept* H1. how we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths build self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing
* H4. simple strategies to help build resilience to negative opinions, judgements and comments
* H5. to recognise and manage internal and external influences on decisions which affect health

and wellbeing | **KS4 Learning opportunities in Health and Wellbeing**Self-concept* H1. to accurately assess their areas of strength and development, and where appropriate, act upon feedback
* H2. how self-confidence self-esteem, and mental health are affected positively and negatively by internal and external influences and ways of managing this
* H4. strategies to develop assertiveness and build resilience to peer and other influences that affect both how they think about themselves and their health and wellbeing
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| Subject **Citizenship** |
| [**Citizenship programmes of study: National curriculum in England**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239060/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Citizenship.pdf) |
| **KS3**Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding whilst developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action. | **KS4**Pupils should develop their skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions. They should experience and evaluate different ways that citizens can act together to solve problems and contribute to society. |

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# Lesson 2 LGBT+ Discrimination (Skill: Confidence)

This lesson uses an LGBT+ topic of your choice (either trans women being excluded from women-only spaces, OR being both an LGBT+ person and a person of faith) to explore the following aspect of controversial issue engagement:

**Factor:** To begin with, some issues we shy away from entirely because they are difficult for a number of reasons. We can be unsure of our place to comment, feel like we don’t know

enough OR that an issue is too personal, and be unsure how to participate and afraid of the consequences of engagement. This can mean that less meaningful research or discussion around a topic takes place or that conversations get shut down entirely, further clouding it in controversy.

**Skill:** Having the confidence in oneself and one’s position to engage in discussion around a particular controversial issue; knowing what steps one can take to bring about this feeling of confidence.

Learning Objectives:

* To develop an understanding of our own uniqueness and respect that of others
* To explore and appreciate our own and other’s identities
* To understand there are visible and invisible parts to our identities

[**The Faith & Belief Forum**](https://faithbeliefforum.org/)

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| * **CORE THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Relationships and Sex Education**Positive relationships* R3. about the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, sex, gender identity, age and sexual orientation
* R4. the difference between biological sex, gender identity and sexual orientation
* R16. to further develop the skills of active listening, clear communication, negotiation and compromise
* R19. to develop conflict management skills and strategies to reconcile after disagreements
 | * R39. the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination on individuals and relationships
* R40. about the unacceptability of prejudice-based language and behaviour, offline and online, including sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, ableism and faith-based prejudice
* R41. the need to promote inclusion and challenge discrimination
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 |
| **KS4 Learning opportunities in Health and Wellbeing**Positive relationships* R35. to evaluate ways in which their behaviours may influence their peers, positively and negatively, including online.
* R36. skills to support younger peers when in positions of influence
* R34. strategies to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination
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# Lesson 3 Does Religion Unite or Divide? (Skill: Critical Thinking)

Having thought about how hard it can be to approach controversial issues, this lesson looks at the challenge of navigating the differing narratives around a certain issue. It explores how critical thinking

can be employed to spot biases and harmful agendas in the sources of information we expose ourselves to, as well as to be mindful of our own agendas / influences when seeking out and consuming information.

**Factor:** Around controversial issues there’s often a complicated landscape for deciphering truths which can be hard to navigate.

**Skill:** Spotting our own biases and thinking critically about the media or information we consume; holding assumptions lightly and emphasising nuance.

Learning Objectives:

* To examine our own information consumption and identify our own personal biases
* To understand how critical thinking can help to spot bias and agenda in narratives
* To practice seeking wide ranges of information and holding our own assumptions lightly

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| * **CORE THEME 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World**Choices and pathways* L10. to recognise and challenge stereotypes and family or cultural expectations that may limit aspirations

Media literacy and digital resilience* L20. that features of the internet can amplify risks and opportunities, e.g. speed and scale of information sharing, blurred public and private boundaries and a perception of anonymity
* L23. to recognise the importance of seeking a variety of perspectives on issues and ways of assessing the evidence which supports those views
 | * L24. to understand how the way people present themselves online can have positive and negative impacts on them
* L25. to make informed decisions about whether different media and digital content are appropriate to view and develop the skills to act on them
* L26. that on any issue there will be a range of viewpoints; to recognise the potential influence of extreme views on people’s attitudes and behaviours
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| * **CORE THEME 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD**
 |
| **KS4 Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World**Media literacy and digital resilience* L24. that social media may disproportionately feature exaggerated or inaccurate information about situations, or extreme viewpoints; to recognise why and how this may influence opinions and perceptions of people and events
* L27. strategies to critically assess bias, reliability and accuracy in digital content
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# Lesson 4 Is Modern British Society Racist? (Skill: Emotional Intelligence)

This lesson will be looking at the strong emotions that controversial issues can evoke in us and other people, and all the ways in which these can serve to shut conversation down or make it difficult to engage. Through the topic of being called out for racism, we’ll be looking at developing emotional literacy to help us acknowledge and address what we and others are feeling and ensure that we don’t lose an opportunity to share ideas and learn.

**Factor:** Controversial issues evoke strong emotions – in ourselves and others

**Skill:** Emotional Intelligence: Accepting and navigating our emotions, being able to empathise

Learning Objectives:

* To understand how emotions are evoked by and impact discussion around controversial issues
* To develop emotional intelligence: awareness of ourselves, empathy for others
* To practice navigating strong emotions

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| * **CORE THEME 1: HEALTH AND WELLBEING**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Health and Wellbeing**Self-concept* H1. how we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths build self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing
* H2. to understand what can affect wellbeing and resilience (e.g. life changes, relationships, achievements and employment)
* H6. how to identify and articulate a range of emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary
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act upon feedback* H2. how self-confidence self-esteem, and mental health are affected positively and negatively by internal and external influences and ways of managing this
* H3. how different media portray idealised and artificial body shapes; how this influences body satisfaction and body image and how to critically appraise

what they see and manage feelings about this | * H4. strategies to develop assertiveness and build resilience to peer and other influences that affect both how they think about themselves and their health and wellbeing
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| * **CORE THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Relationships and Sex Education**Positive relationships* R3. about the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, sex, gender identity, age and sexual orientation

Forming and maintaining respectful relationships* R16. to further develop the skills of active listening, clear communication, negotiation and compromise

Social influences* R39. the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination on individuals and relationships
 | **KS4 Learning opportunities in Relationships and Sex Education**Social influences* R34. strategies to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination
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# Lesson 5 Do environmentalists do more harm than good? (Skill: Acceptance)

This lesson sees students exploring the scenario of discussing an issue with someone from a completely different background.

**Factor:** Our own identities, beliefs and backgrounds shape our views and outlooks; these can be vastly different, and this can make reaching common ground feel impossible.

**Skill:** Acceptance, including difference. The aim here is to truly internalise the mantra ‘It’s ok to disagree’ and move towards being open to learning something from people we can’t necessarily agree with.

Learning Objectives:

* To be able to understand how our own identities, backgrounds and experiences shape our views
* To practice the skill of accepting and moving past difference
* To explore learning something new from those we can’t agree with

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* **Evaluate** to discern value for others and themselves
 | **2** [**The national curriculum framework for RE (NCFRE)**](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/RE_Review_Summary.pdf)**KS3*** B2. Observe and interpret a wide range of ways in which commitment and identity are expressed.

They develop insightful analysis and evaluation of controversies about commitment to religions and worldviews, accounting for the impact of diversity within and between communities.* C3. Explore and express insights into significant moral and ethical questions posed by being human in ways that are well-informed and which invite personal response, using reasoning which may draw on a range of examples from real life, fiction or other forms of media.
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| Subject **PSHE** |
| [**PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE education**](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/PSHE%20Association%20Programme%20of%20Study%20for%20PSHE%20Education%20%2528Key%20stages%201%25E2%2580%25935%2529%252C%20Jan%202020_0.pdf)*Updated to include the statutory requirements outlined in the new RSE curriculum* |
| * **CORE THEME 3: LIVING IN THE WIDER WORLD**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World**Choices and pathways* L10. to recognise and challenge stereotypes and family or cultural expectations that may limit aspirations

Media literacy and digital resilience* L23. to recognise the importance of seeking a variety of perspectives on issues and ways of assessing the evidence which supports those views
* L26. that on any issue there will be a range of viewpoints; to recognise the potential influence of extreme views on people’s attitudes and behaviours
 | **KS4 Learning opportunities in Living in the Wider World**Media literacy and digital resilience* L27. strategies to critically assess bias, reliability and accuracy in digital content
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| Subject **Citizenship** |
| [**Citizenship programmes of study: National curriculum in England**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239060/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Citizenship.pdf) |
| **KS3**Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding whilst developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action. | **KS4**Pupils should develop their skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions. They should experience and evaluate different ways that citizens can act together to solve problems and contribute to society. |

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# Lesson 6 Should the Government Rehabilitate Convicted Persons? (Skill: Flexibility)

Diversity exists within and across groups – both individuals and groups are complex, therefore issues are too. This lesson looks at what happens when we oversimplify issues and our responses to them.

**Factor:** All the factors we have explored so far (issues evoke strong emotions, are often surrounded by misinformation, can expose fundamental differences, etc.) can make it challenging to approach controversial issues with an open mind and with a sense that we are free to change our minds. This can polarise us into ‘camps’ which are hard to deviate from if they are tied up in our identity / notion of loyalty. This means that our own arguments can have weak spots, while we blindly overlook anything of use in a seemingly opposing perspective.

**Skill:** Flexibility: How can we resist the idea of ‘camps’ surrounding a certain issue, and open up space for fluidity and complexity? From identity package: who are we?

Learning Objectives:

* To identify the dangers of siding with one ‘camp’ around a controversial issue
* To reflect on the importance of keeping an open-mind and actively listening

[**The Faith & Belief Forum**](https://faithbeliefforum.org/)

These pages show indicative maps of where we think this package fits with the RE, PSHE and Citizenship curricula:

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| Subject **RE** |
| **1** [**Living Difference III**](https://documents.hants.gov.uk/education/LivingDifferenceIII-March2017.pdf)Approach to enquiry five key steps:* **Communicate** and **Apply** to their own and others’ experience
* **Enquire** and **Contextualise** to engage intellectually
* **Evaluate** to discern value for others and themselves
 | **2** [**The national curriculum framework for RE (NCFRE)**](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/RE_Review_Summary.pdf)**KS3*** B2. Observe and interpret a wide range of ways in which commitment and identity are expressed.

They develop insightful analysis and evaluation of controversies about commitment to religions and worldviews, accounting for the impact of diversity within and between communities.* C3. Explore and express insights into significant moral and ethical questions posed by being human in ways that are well-informed and which invite personal response, using reasoning which may draw on a range of examples from real life, fiction or other forms of media.
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| Subject **PSHE** |
| [**PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE education**](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/system/files/PSHE%20Association%20Programme%20of%20Study%20for%20PSHE%20Education%20%2528Key%20stages%201%25E2%2580%25935%2529%252C%20Jan%202020_0.pdf)*Updated to include the statutory requirements outlined in the new RSE curriculum* |
| * **CORE THEME 2: RELATIONSHIPS**
 |
| **KS3 Learning opportunities in Relationships and Sex Education**Social influences* R42. to recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online
* R44. that the need for peer approval can generate feelings of pressure and lead to increased

risk-taking; strategies to manage this* R45. about the factors that contribute to young people joining gangs; the social, legal and physical consequences of gang behaviours
* R46. strategies to manage pressure to join a gang, exit strategies and how to access appropriate support
 | **KS4 Learning opportunities in Relationships and Sex Education**Social influences* R35. to evaluate ways in which their behaviours may influence their peers, positively and negatively, including online, and in situations involving weapons or gangs
* R36. skills to support younger peers when in positions of influence
* R37. to recognise situations where they are being adversely influenced, or are at risk, due to being part of a particular group or gang; strategies to access appropriate help
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| Subject **Citizenship** |
| [**Citizenship programmes of study: National curriculum in England**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239060/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Citizenship.pdf) |
| **KS3**Pupils should use and apply their knowledge and understanding whilst developing skills to research and interrogate evidence, debate and evaluate viewpoints, present reasoned arguments and take informed action. | **KS4**Pupils should develop their skills to be able to use a range of research strategies, weigh up evidence, make persuasive arguments and substantiate their conclusions. They should experience and evaluate different ways that citizens can act together to solve problems and contribute to society. |

The Controversial Issues package also helps support the learning outlined in the following curricula:

# Religious Education Council of England and Wales – REsilience project

The REC has developed a pioneering project to assist schools in teaching controversial issues. Our package supports the unit [**Identity, tradition and belonging**](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Exemplar_unit_overview.pdf):

* + What does it mean to have plural identities?
	+ Why to people fear difference? How does this fear manifest itself?
	+ Are all traditions and beliefs acceptable?
	+ Why does it matter that one belongs to a group and to whom do we belong?
	+ Valuing diversity

We recommend that teachers considering using our lesson plan, follow the evaluation and action planning tools published on the [**REsilience project website**](https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resilience-teaching-controversial-topics/)

# RAQA Religious Studies syllabus GCSE A (8062) –

[**Component 2 – Thematic studies**](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062/subject-content/component-2-thematic-studies)

# Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict

* + Religion, violence, terrorism and war
	+ Religion and belief in 21st century conflict

(Religion and belief as a cause of war and violence in the contemporary world)

# Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment

* + - 1. **Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice**
	+ Issues of equality, freedom of religion and belief including freedom of religious expression
	+ Human rights and the responsibilities that come with rights, including the responsibility to respect the rights of others
	+ Social justice
	+ Racial prejudice and discrimination

All Faith & Belief Forum resources have been developed

to reflect the proposed new vision and national entitlement put forward by the Commission on Religious Education

in their report “*Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward. A national plan for RE* ”:

“Young people face many challenges in the modern world. Amongst these is learning to navigate the world of religion and belief. Controversy abounds and, in the midst of this, young people are seeking to understand the complex issues that are debated and to make their own decisions on these controversial matters. This is an academically demanding task. For many years, Religious Education (RE) has been

the school subject that has most equipped them for this task. In its history, RE has significantly changed its approach in response to the changing nature of society. The time

is now ripe for another development in approach if the subject is to be fit for purpose for the decades to come.

The nature of RE has changed over time to reflect new understandings and new social realities. At the time of the 1944 Education Act, it was known as Religious Instruction, was limited to Christianity and was the only compulsory subject. Over time, subject experts came to recognise that young people needed

to understand both a wider range of religious and non-religious world views and the idea of diversity within world views.

The time is right for a new vision for the subject if we

are to prepare children and young people for living in the increasingly diverse world in which they find themselves.”

The Safe Space resources maps to many of the Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development objectives:

# Spiritual

Explore beliefs and experience; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.

# Moral

Recognise right and wrong; respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views.

# Social

Use a range of social skills; participate in the local community; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer and cooperate; resolve conflict; engage with the ‘British values’ of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance.

# Cultural

Appreciate cultural influences; appreciate the role of Britain’s parliamentary system; participate in culture opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.

The Safe Space resource maps to the British Values referred to in the citizenship curriculum:

* Democracy
* The rule of law
* Individual liberty
* Mutual respect
* Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

The Safe Space resource maps to the following articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Pupils commit to:

* Being the best that they can be. Listening in lessons and completing all work set *(Article 28)*
* Using Pupil Voice to improve their school life *(Article 12)*

Staff commit to:

* Giving every pupil the opportunity and respect to voice their views
* Making decisions with the pupils’ views in mind *(Article 12)*

Pupils and staff:

* Not saying what we think if it is hurtful or offensive
* Listening to and considering what others have to say *(Article 12)*
* Being responsible for looking after one another
* Following the school rules *(Article 19)*
* Treating everyone equally, no matter their religion, race or gender *(Article 3)*

We are excited you are using this package with your school and students and would welcome your feedback, as we are constantly evaluating and improving these resources.

# Sarah Koster

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